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A Survey and Evaluation of the Archeological Resources of the Little Lynches Creek Watershed in Lancaster County, South Carolina

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A SURVEY AND EVALUATION OF THE ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES OF THE LITTLE LYNCHES CREEK WATERSHED IN LANCASTER COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA
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by

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INTRODUCTION

In January 1968 the Soil Conservation Service of the Department of Agriculture formulated plans for the Little Lynches Creek Watershed project in Lancaster and Kershaw Counties, South Carolina. This project was initiated to alleviate certain critical problems in the watershed.

> The principal watershed problems are floodwater and sediment damage to flood plain lands, flood damage to roads and bridges, severe erosion to roadbanks and other critical areas, sheet erosion on the cultivated uplands, and an inadequate water supply.... Flooding occurs an average of 3 to 4 times per year.... The town of Kershaw, industries and rural families need additional water to meet present and future needs. (Soil Conservation Service 1968: 1)

Measures proposed under the work plan include five single purpose floodwater retarding structures and one multiple purpose (flood prevention and municipal water supply) structure, all to be installed in Lancaster County. These dams will be earthfilled embankments with concrete principal spillways and excavated emergency spillways.

The Soil Conservation Service contacted the Institute of Archeology and Anthropology to survey and evaluate the archeological resources of the Little Lynches Creek Watershed in March 1975. The field survey portion of this project was conducted May 8 through May 15 by Susan Jackson of the Institute staff.

In Lancaster County, 395 acres which will be directly impacted by the construction of the six dams were surveyed. This area is in south central Lancaster County, south and east of Heath Springs (Fig. 1). The streams upon which the dams are to be built represent the northwestern extension of the Pee Dee River drainage in South Carolina.

Dam site number 1, with a sediment pool covering 82 acres is on Hanging Rock Creek immediately north of the Lancaster - Kershaw County line. This reservoir is crossed by county road 381. Site 4 on Horton's Creek east of Heath Springs will cover 77 acres. On Haile Gold Mine Creek, east of Kershaw, dam site 8 will inundate 34 acres. Site 10 on Blackmon Branch will cover 18 acres. The largest reservoir, site 11 on Baskins and Bend Creeks will flood 100 acres and dam site 12 will flood 39 acres on Lick Creek. The additional acreage covered during the survey was in those areas where there is likely to be borrowing of fill dirt for the earthen dams.

THE AREA

Little Lynches Creek Watershed is on the boundary of the Southern Piedmont Land Resources Area and the Carolina - Georgia Sandhills Land Resources Area (Corps of Engineers 1972). Land in the Southern Piedmont region consists of gentle to moderately steep slopes and generally narrow stream valleys. The uplands are suited for cultivation, however the stream valleys contain thin or rocky soils subject to sedimentation and erosion hence they are most often wooded and not given to agricultural usage (Corps of Engineers 1972). In this region, the Carolina - Georgia Sandhills area is not well suited for extensive agriculture, therefore pasture is often maintained on suitable flatland.

The soils present in the survey area result from the complex geologic association caused by the irregular coastal plain overlap. The soils are not particularly fertile and the problems of sheet erosion cause the area to be even less suitable for cultivation without heavy fertilization and drainage control.

Present day vegetation in the Little Lynches Creek Watershed includes short leaf pines, mixed hardwood - pine forests, and grasslands (Corps of Engineers 1972: 8). These vegetation types include a wide range of wildlife habitat and support deer, fox, squirrel, quail, and dove. The potential natural vegetation of the area as defined by Küchler (1964: 2) includes an oak - hickory- pine forest and southern mixed forest. Dominant species include hickory (Carya sp.), pine (Pinus sp.), oak (Quercus sp.) beech (Fagus sp.), gum (Liquidambar sp.), and magnolia (Magnolia sp.). Streams in the watershed are of little value as fish habitat, supporting some suckers, minnows, and sunfishes (Soil Conservation Service 1968: 6).

The climate of this portion of the state is mild with an average annual precipitation of 44.8 inches well distributed throughout the year. The average growing season is 7 1/2 months long. Minor droughts usually occur once in 7 years (Soil Conservation Service 1973: 124), however in both 1954 and 1955, Little Lynches Creek ceased to flow for several weeks.

Presently all land in the watershed is in private hands except for a municipal reservoir on Hanging Rock Creek and public land in Kershaw and Heath Springs. Land use in the area is as follows:

Land use	Percent
Cultivated	14
Pasture and Idle	23
Woods	58
Miscellaneous	5

(Soil Conservation Service 1968: 5)

DOCUMENT SEARCH

Site files at the Institute of Archeology and Anthropology were checked to determine if there are previously recorded archeological sites within the

areas to be surveyed. None had been recorded in the actual survey areas or in the watershed.

Mr. John Califf of the Department of Archives and History reported two historical sites in the watershed. The site of the Battle of Hanging Rock, an encounter during the Revolutionary War in 1780, is on Hanging Rock Creek well north of the planned reservoir of dam site 1. Haile's Gold Mine, an extremely productive mine of the nineteenth century, is on Haile Gold Mine Creek, east of Kershaw. This site is located above the pool of proposed dam site 8. Currently this area is being mined for sericite.

Mr. Jim Schaeffer of the Catawba Regional Planning Council related that his office had no historic sites on file which would be threatened by the construction of the dams.

Mrs. Viola Floyd of the Lancaster County Historical Commission was consulted during the survey and noted that although there are numerous sites of historical significance in the watershed, none is within the areas covered during the present survey. One site however, the Hanging Rock Presbyterian Cemetery, a late eighteenth and early nineteenth century cemetery, may lie within the expected floodwater pool of dam site 12 on Lick Creek (Lancaster County Historical Commission 1974: 41).

On both the Kershaw District and Lancaster District maps of the Mills' Atlas of South Carolina (1965) there are numerous house sites and mills noted within the watershed. Mills surveyed the state between 1820 and 1825 and the resulting maps are an excellent record of the extent and pattern of settlement in South Carolina in the early nineteenth century. In addition, Robert Mills' Statistics of South Carolina was consulted for any pertinent information.

THE SURVEY

The method employed during this survey was that of walking the reservoirs and inspecting the surface of every exposed (unwooded and unpastured) area. This method was utilized to inspect power line right of ways, roads and trails, and land that had been cleared for dam construction and spillway excavation. In areas where there was no exposed land, on ridge tops and slopes, test pits were excavated. Sedimentation along stream bottoms is estimated to be from 4 to 6 feet deep and pits were dug with the expectation of locating buried sites. It was also anticipated that inspection of deep stream cuts would locate buried sites along the bottoms.

Three distinct environmental zones are found within the survey area. One zone, the stream bottoms, makes up a fairly small percentage of the total area surveyed. Generally, these bottoms are very narrow and give way immediately to steep or moderately steep slopes. In the past the bottoms have had tons of sediment deposited over them. Although most of the bottoms within the reservoirs do not presently have and have not in the past had the potential to be utilized for cultivation, they could well have been suited for hunting or perhaps fishing stations.

The second zone, the ridge slopes with occasional low terraces, accounts for the majority of the land within the proposed reservoirs. These slopes have been subjected to erosion where not wooded and consequently the sites that are found here are close to the surface. The slopes would most likely not have been suitable for extended occupation, however they could have been utilized for temporary camps.

As indicated by the information gathered during the present survey, the stream channels, which make up the third environmental zone had a very limited and specialized usage. The only tangible evidence of utilization of the channel was seen as the remains of one nineteenth century grist mill. This of course does not imply that the streams were not utilized prehistorically. The stream channels in the area surveyed have been accumulating sediment rapidly since this portion of the state has been intensively cultivated and cut over for timber.

During the present survey nine archeological sites were located. Two are historic sites of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Seven sites, including one of the above which has multiple components, are early lithic sites. In addition, a rock shelter site of unknown cultural affiliation was located.

The early prehistory of the Piedmont of the Carolinas is not well understood at this time. This is the case primarily because there have been few programs directed specifically at investigating these early Piedmont cultures although the Piedmont is a unique environmental zone with a unique cultural heritage. Much of our knowledge of the early Piedmont inhabitants has been learned during projects which were aimed at an entirely different question.

Another source of information about the early occupants of this area of South Carolina is the environmental reconnaissance of projects similar in scope to the present one. The information derived from these projects has consisted principally of locating sites, collecting artifacts, and recording the locations in the site files at the Institute of Archeology. Most often the results of these surveys tend to reconfirm the ideas that archeologists hold about the Piedmont; that is, that small preceramic sites abound throughout the area on slopes, ridges, and knolls adjacent to both

large and small streams (Bianchi 1974, 1975; Hartley 1975).

There have been a few projects undertaken with the stated aim of understanding the early cultures of the area of Carolina above the Fall Line. The most valuable archeological study of the Carolina Piedmont was made by Joffre Coe (1964). Through several years of work in North Carolina, addressing himself to environmental as well as archeological data, Coe developed basic chronologies and an understanding of broad settlement patterns in the Carolina Piedmont.

During 1969 and 1970, surveys were made of both the South Carolina and Georgia sides of the proposed Trotter's Shoals Reservoir (Hemmings 1970a; Hutto 1970). Trotters Shoals is located on the upper Savannah River and falls within the Piedmont region of Carolina and Georgia. In both surveys, many preceramic sites similar to those found during the present survey were located. From these surveys, Hemmings (1970b) developed an outline of prehistoric settlement and subsistence within a region of the Piedmont.

Kelly (1972) surveyed a portion of the South Carolina Piedmont in Fairfield and Chester Counties. His findings tend to support what was suspected, although not known with certainty, of the area.

HANGING ROCK CREEK SITES

38LA31 - Miller's Mill

This site is located on Hanging Rock Creek at the first tributary west of road 381. At this point there is a wooden foundation spanning the creek which is reported by the land owner to have been covered with earth in the early part of this century. On the north side of the creek there is a high knoll and on the south side, the ridge is immediately adjacent to the stream bed. The area of the mill pond is visible as having been dug out of these features.

There is evidence of a stone structure impounding the waters of the pond on the north bank of the creek.

This mill is reported by the land owner to be known as Miller's Mill. Both the Kershaw and Lancaster District maps in Mill's Atlas of South Carolina (1965) show a mill on Hanging Rock Creek in this area which is associated with the property of the Miller family. It is felt that this site warrants some further investigation in the form of document research and photographing of the site. In the early nineteenth century, grist milling was a significant local industry which was an important economic activity.

38LA32

Site 38LA32 is located on the north side of Hanging Rock Creek in the powerline right of way which crosses the head of the reservoir of dam site 1. The site consists of a scatter of numerous quartz flakes and one slate flake spread over an area of approximately 50 by 100 feet. The hillside slopes gently at this point and the site is washing toward the creek. It was determined by excavating a test pit that this is a surface site with no appreciable depth. There are no recommendations for further work at this site.

LICK CREEK SITES

38LA33

This site is located at the foot of the dirt road which leads to the dam of the Lick Creek reservoir. The area of the site, which is directly adjacent to the creek, had recently been cleared of vegetation thus exposing the ground surface. This site covered a small 50 by 50 foot area on the narrow flood plain, 2 to 3 feet above the creek. A steep ridge rises northwest of the site.

Collected during the survey were several quartz flakes, one slate flake, one small quartz core, and one resharpened slate Guilford projectile point. This projectile point is somewhat smaller than the Guilford points described by Coe (1964: 43) due to the resharpening. This is one of the few temporally diagnostic artifacts found during the survey. Guilford points are markers of the late Archaic dated at 4000 BC.

38LA34

Site 38LA34 was located on the cleared dam centerline on the north side of Lick Creek. A scatter of quartz and chert flakes extends up the cleared slope beginning approximately 75 feet from the creek to the top of the ridge. The site has been disturbed by the recent clearing activity and is presently washing down the slope. This site likely extends into the woods on either side of the cleared area, however this could not be ascertained due to the heavy ground cover. Associated with this site, as well as with the other lithic sites located during the survey, were large amounts of crushed quartz.

38LA35

Site 38LA35 is on the cleared emergency spillway on the north side of Lick Creek. The primary concentration of artifacts was found between survey stakes marked $\frac{96 + 00}{52 + 50}$ and $\frac{95 + 00}{52 + 50}$. This is a lithic site similar to the others located during the survey. Found on the site were quartz flakes, one quartz biface, and the tip of one blade of heavily patinated slate or slate-like material.

In addition to the lithic material located on this site, one piece of 19th century ironstone - whiteware was found.

38LA36

This site is located on the cleared dam centerline of dam site 12 on the south side of Lick Creek. The site is on the side of a steep slope directly opposite site 38LA34. It extends 75 to 100 feet to an elevation of 30 feet above the creek.

Quartz flakes and one quartz biface were collected from this site.

All of the sites located at the Lick Creek reservoir are apparently Archaic sites. As determined by testing they are surface sites and from the preceeding it can be seen that they are found in a variety of topographic situations, being located on floodplains, slopes and ridge tops.

HAILE GOLD MINE CREEK SITES

38LA37

This is a rock shelter located on the east side of Haile Gold Mine Creek approximately 150 yards south of road 188. This is a relatively large shelter about 3.5 feet high at the entrance, extending seven feet to the back wall. Although the entrance was raked to clear leaves and pine straw and two test pits were excavated, no artifacts were seen. Undoubtedly the shelter has been occupied at various times in the past and evidence of these occupations may be buried deeper than the site was tested.

There are no recommendations for immediate work at this site, however if in the future it is threatened by flooding, test excavations would be required.

38LA38

This site is a late nineteenth or early twentieth century house site located above the sediment pool, north of road 188 on the east side of Haile Gold Mine Creek.

Eleven pieces of late nineteenth century ceramics, one possible medicine bottle fragment, and three sherds of brown glass were found at this site.

In addition to the historic material on the site, one chert and two quartz flakes were found.

No further work is recommended at this site.

BLACKMON BRANCH SITE

38LA39

This site is located at the head of reservoir 10 on the east side of Blackmon Branch. The site was seen as a thin scatter of quartz flakes and tools presently washing down the slope. Collected during the survey were quartz flakes, one quartz crystal, and the base of one quartz projectile point.

There are no recommendations for further work at this site.

THE VALUE AND EVALUATION OF THE SURVEY

The primary value of this survey is that the information gathered tells us that in both the distant and recent past the area has been utilized for a variety of reasons. Presently a portion of the land is in pasture, part of it is being maintained for growing timber, some is being mined, and a small portion is under cultivation. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the streams were utilized as a power source for grist mills and there was some farming done.

There is evidence of prehistoric exploitation of the land based on the lithic sites located during the survey. These sites indicate that, at

least, the area was hunted and perhaps utilized as a source of raw materials for stone tools.

There is a significant hiatus between the periods of occupation suggested by the results of the survey. No firm evidence for occupation from approximately 4000 BC until 1820, when Mill's survey was undertaken, was seen.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE WORK

The concentration of archeological sites recorded during this project was in the Lick Creek reservoir. Here, an optimal situation for archeological survey was presented in that certain areas of the reservoir had recently been cleared of vegetation and the survey was undertaken before significant washing occurred. The presence of heavy ground cover invariably imposes severe limitations on a survey of this type (Hemmings 1970a; Hutto 1970; Bianchi 1974, 1975; Hartley 1975).

Despite the amount of recent survey work undertaken in the South Carolina Piedmont, archeologists are still far removed from understanding the patterns of prehistoric man's interaction with the environment, and data concerning prehistoric activity in environmental zones such as occur in the Little Lynches Creek Watershed are rapidly being lost. In order to adequately evaluate the archeological resources in not only the Little Lynches Creek Watershed, but other similar Soil Conservation Service projects, it is felt that a more intensive analysis, than that possible during the present survey, is required.

Because there is firm evidence, based upon the findings of the present survey, of prehistoric activity in a variety of topographic situations in the Lick Creek reservoir, the Institute purposes to perform further investigation of this area. Additionally, this reservoir is relatively small (39 acres) thus

eliminating certain logistical problems encountered working in a larger area.

The work plan proposed is as follows: 1. As the basin is being cleared, a field crew consisting of two to three people would reconnoiter and locate sites in the cleared portions of the reservoir. 2. The location of these sites will be recorded precisely with respect to environmental features and other sites in the reservoir by using survey equipment. 3. Based upon evidence derived from subsurface testing, the sites on the slopes of this reservoir appear to be relatively small surface scatters. In order to have tight spacial control of the data, the entire surface collection will be mapped. 4. A total collection of artifacts will be made for further analysis. 5. As there exists the possibility of buried and stratified sites on the alluvial flood plain, backhoe trenching will be undertaken at selected location along the stream bottoms. The selection of these locations will be made after consulting with a geologist in order that those areas which have the greatest potential of covering sites will be chosen.

The field work involved in this project will be coordinated with the work plan of the Soil Conservation Service. It is anticipated that this portion of the study will take ten (10) days to complete. This study will in no way delay the SCS program. Analysis of the data and other aspects of laboratory work, such as preparation and typing of the manuscript, cataloging materials, illustration, and photography is slated to be completed in fifteen (15) days. Based upon a figure of $200 per day, the proposed budget for this project is five thousand ($5,000) dollars. If during the clearing of the basin there is a backhoe and operator available which could be utilized for profiling the flood plain, the Institute would request its services for a total of six (6) hours. If this is not possible, an additional $180 is requested for hiring backhoe and operator for six hours @ $30 per hour, bringing the entire budget proposed to $5180.

The value of the proposed study is twofold. First, it will add to the inventory of data basic information which is sorely lacking in the archeological record. Second, and of immediate value to the Soil Conservation Service, it will enable the Institute of Archeology to more efficiently survey and evaluate the archeological resources of similar SCS projects. In the Piedmont, channel improvement, dams, and other land treatment measures are undertaken in areas which are experiencing similar basic problems and these areas are alike environmentally and topographically. As the Soil Conservation Service proposes more projects of this type, there is an immediate and urgent need to extract as much information as possible, through well planned projects, from areas before they are lost to further study.

SUMMARY

During the survey of the Little Lynches Creek Watershed, nine archeological sites were located: one nineteenth century grist mill on Hanging Rock Creek; one nineteenth and twentieth century house site on Haile Gold Mine Creek; one rock shelter of unknown cultural affiliation on Haile Gold Mine Creek; and seven lithic sites (including one of the above with an historic component) on Blackmon Branch, Hanging Rock Creek, and Lick Creek. The majority of lithic sites, presumably Archaic in origin, were located on Lick Creek. This is due to the fact that certain areas of this reservoir had recently been cleared of vegetation and the survey was undertaken before the sites in these areas had been significantly disturbed by washing. As determined by subsurface testing, these are surface sites seen as thin scatters of stone flakes and tools. One Guilford projectile point was collected from site 38LA33 definitely marking this as an Archaic site of some six thousand years ago.

The Institute of Archeology and Anthropology proposes mitigation for this project in the Lick Creek reservoir in the form of an intensive spatial analysis of the relationships which exist between sites(to be located after the basin is cleared) and within each individual site. This study will be based upon information derived by mapping sites and artifacts and laboratory analysis of the materials collected. It is further proposed that profiles be cut by backhoe in the flood plain at selected locations to determine if buried sites are present. The proposed budget for this project is $5,000 ($5,180 if it is necessary to hire a backhoe and operator).

This study is proposed for several reasons. There exists at this time only a general understanding of the nature and function of these rather common lithic sites in the South Carolina Piedmont. They occur on ridge tops and slopes of both large and small streams of the region and these areas are rapidly being developed and lost through projects similar to the Little Lynches Creek Watershed program. Additionally, the information derived from this project will be of direct benefit to the Soil Conservation Service and other federal, state, and local agencies in that the Institute of Archeology and Anthropology will be better equipped to adequately evaluate the archeological resources of areas in which programs of development and construction are planned.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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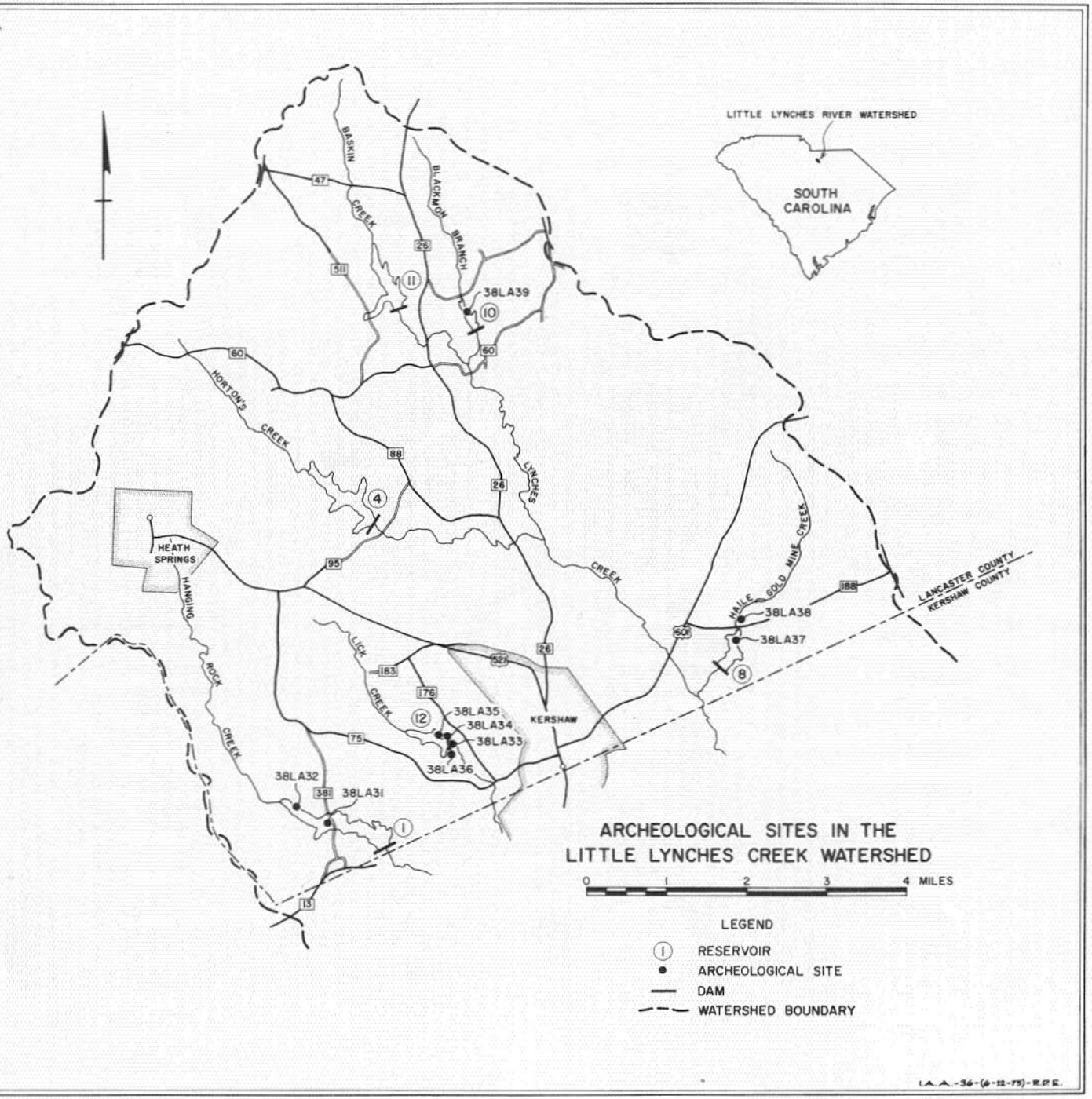
LITTLE LYNCHES RIVER WATERSHED
SOUTH CAROLINA
BASKIN CREEK
BLACKMON BRANCH
47
511
26
11
38LA39
10
60
HORTON'S CREEK
88
4
LYNCHES CREEK
HEATH SPRINGS
95
HANGING ROCK CREEK
LICK CREEK
183
176
12
38LA35
38LA34
38LA33
38LA36
75
38LA32
38
38LA31
1
15
62
KERSHAW
HAILE GOLD MINE CREEK
188
LANCASTER COUNTY
KERSHAW COUNTY
38LA38
38LA37
8
ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES IN THE
LITTLE LYNCHES CREEK WATERSHED
0 1 2 3 4 MILES
LEGEND
RESERVOIR
ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE
DAM
WATERSHED BOUNDARY
I.A.A.-36-(6-12-75)-R.P.E.